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Go home, Percy!

Thank the Lord for small favors. The junior senator from Illinois, Charles H. Percy, and his wife have left South Vietnam. Now that they have entertained the Percys, the brave soldiers can go back to the grim job of protecting themselves without having to also worry about protecting the Percys.

While in South Vietnam, Senator Percy commandeered a C.I.A. helicopter to fly over Dakson, a village near the Cambodian border which had been ravaged the day before by the Viet Cong.

"You hear of accidental bombings, problems created by our own forces on occasion," the senator explained ungenerously. "I wanted to see what has happened in that particular area."

Over Dakson, the senator-turned-military-observer could not see any Viet Cong in the village and instructed the pilot to land. The Percy party, leaving Mrs. Percy in the plane, disembarked and were promptly fired upon by Viet Cong, who had not

left Dakson after all. For a fateful 15 minutes it was touch-and-go for the Percy party, but the C.I.A. eventually got them out safely.

One of the senator's comrades was Scott Cohen, a former CIA operative, who has been the senator's foreign affairs adviser for four years. Observations on their findings in South Vietnam could be expected from Mr. Percy and Mr. Cohen, and sure enough, as soon as the pair got outside the hospitality of the Defense Department and into the safety of Bangkok, the senator issued a statement criticizing the Saigon Government and saying he was not "optimistic" about his own country's efforts in South Vietnam.

If we have had a bellyful of Senator Percy, imagine how the men in South Vietnam must feel. Let's keep the beautiful Washington people in Washington minding their business so that the people in South Vietnam can properly mind theirs.